

London Business School Code of Conduct

1. Purpose

The School's vision is to have a profound impact on the way the world does business and the way business impacts the world. It aims to achieve this vision through the delivery of degree and executive education programmes and the production and dissemination of high-quality research.

This vision requires a commitment to ethical standards in both research and teaching. London Business School expects all those engaged in research to maintain the highest ethical standards and integrity in accordance with the principles set out in the Research Ethics Policy and the School's Data Protection Policy.

The School is publicly accountable for the research undertaken under its auspices and this Code of Conduct is intended to provide general guidance on good practice in research and in particular guidelines for the ethical conduct of research involving human subjects and the use of personal data.

The development of the Code is in part a response to increasingly demanding external expectations concerning standards of research governance and probity in higher education.

Our commitment to The Concordat to Support Research Integrity:

In July 2012, Universities UK, published the Concordat to Support Research Integrity. The Concordat is the UK's national policy statement on research integrity, and was devised, and endorsed, by a broad group of Signatories – funders of research, government departments, and other key stakeholders – with the provision of expert advice from the UK Research Integrity Office (UKRIO).

The Concordat was revised in October 2019, and institutions in receipt of funding from UK Research and Innovation (UKRI), and a number of other funding bodies, have a requirement to comply with the key principles of the Concordat.

The School is wholly committed to the ambitions of the Concordat, and in supporting research integrity and rigour, our ethical framework, complies with the associated key principles.

Acting in accordance with the five specific Concordat principles, the School endorses:

Commitment 1: Maintaining the highest standards of research integrity

Commitment 2: Ensuring that research is conducted according to appropriate ethical, legal and professional frameworks, obligations and standards.

Commitment 3: Embedding a culture of research integrity, by supporting a research environment that is underpinned by a culture of integrity and based on good governance, best practice and support for the development of researchers.

Commitment 4: Using transparent, timely, robust and fair processes to deal with allegations of research misconduct, should they arise.

Commitment 5: Working together, to strengthen the integrity of research and to reviewing progress regularly, and openly. In September 2009 the UK Research Integrity Office (UKRIO) designed and published a Code of Practice for Research to encourage good research conduct within UK universities and help prevent misconduct. This Code continues to draw on some of the principles set out in the UKRIO Code of Practice and complements existing guidance on research conduct as published by UKRI and the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC), Research Ethics Framework.

The Prevent Duty is a new law which London Business School and all other UK higher education institutions are required to comply with.

The Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 introduced a duty on institutions to have due regard to the need to prevent people being drawn into terrorism - the Prevent Duty. In ensuring the protection of the School's faculty, staff, and students, who are engaged in research into potentially sensitive topics and any associated material this Code also acknowledges the Prevent Duty and as such the research ethics policies and process take into consideration any risks associated with both accessing sensitive material online and also as part of any proposed research.

This Code applies to all Subject Areas and is intended for the School's faculty, staff, students, and visitors who are engaged in research and is to be read in conjunction with the School Research Ethics Policy and the School's Data Protection Policy. As required, this Code will be made available to research funding agencies, and any other national/ international organisations in the interests of transparency.

2. Key definitions

Research ethics:

'Research ethics' refers to the moral principles guiding research, from its inception through to completion and publication of results and beyond.

Research:

'Research' is defined as any form of disciplined inquiry that aims to contribute to a body of knowledge or theory.

Research misconduct:

Performance or conduct by a London Business School researcher that exhibits one or more of the characteristics set out under Section 4 of the Research Ethics Policy and under Section 2 of the Misconduct Policy.

Research participants:

'Human participants' (or subjects) who are the focus of research.

Researcher:

All members of London Business School conducting research at any level, including faculty, research fellows, research assistants, visitors, staff, and students.

3. Principles

At London Business School, we strive to have a profound impact on the way the world does business and the way business impacts the world. In research terms, this translates into delivering world-leading rigorous research which is underpinned by academic excellence. Maintaining integrity and high standards is of central importance to the School's commitment to achieve these goals.

Researchers should adhere to the following Principles in all aspects of their work, which set out the responsibilities and values relevant to the conduct of good research practice:

3.1 Excellence

Researchers should strive for excellence when conducting research and aim to produce and disseminate work of the highest quality.

3.2 Honesty and Integrity

Researchers should demonstrate honesty, integrity and professionalism, in relation to their research and that of others.

3.3 Co-operation

While recognising the need for researchers to protect their own research interests in the process of planning their research and obtaining results, the School encourages researchers to be as open as possible in discussing their work with other researchers and the public. This principle is subject to exceptions in respect of Data Protection and Intellectual Property.

3.4 Conflicts of Interest

Researchers must be honest about conflict of interest issues whether real, potential, or perceived, when reporting results. They should declare any potential or actual conflicts relating to research and where necessary take steps to resolve them.

3.5 Participation

First, and foremost, in relation to participation in research, the School's Data Protection Policy, and the legal obligations associated under the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR 2018) and Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR should be adhered to.

The School's Data Protection Policy is enclosed.

In addition, the following principles, outlined in the UKRIO Code of Practice, continues to support best practice and integrity in the protection of participants:

Participants must be informed fully about the purpose, methods and intended possible uses of the research, what their participation in the research entails and what risks, if any, are involved.

The confidentiality of information supplied by research subjects and the anonymity of respondents must be respected.

Research participants must participate in a voluntary way, free from any coercion.

Harm to research participants must be avoided.

Participants are not obliged to participate in research even after they have consented to it. They must be given the right to withdraw, including retrospectively, without any penalty and are not obliged to provide a reason for withdrawing. They are entitled to ask for their own data to be destroyed.

3.6 Accountability

Researchers and, in particular, those named as principal investigators or grant-holders must ensure that the research they are undertaking is consistent with the terms and conditions defined by the sponsoring organisation (or covered by agreements between the School and the sponsor). This includes, but is not limited to, ensuring that the research programme carried out adheres to that defined in the original proposal to the sponsor, unless amendments have been agreed in writing; that finance is used solely for the purpose for which it was intended; that reports are accurate and timely; and that conditions relating to publication and to ownership of Intellectual Property are followed.

3.7 Accessibility

Researchers have an obligation to keep records and data in such a way as to facilitate the verification of the research by other researchers or future research.

3.8 Confidentiality

Data Protection and Privacy

As outlined under 3.5 above, researchers should refer to the School's Data Protection Policy, which highlights our legal obligations in respect to data protection and privacy laws

Intellectual Property

Confidentiality may also be necessary for a limited period in the case of contract research, or other research which is under consideration for patent (or design) protection, or for other commercial-in-confidence reasons. Where confidentiality agreements limit publication and discussion, limitations and restrictions must be explicitly stated in the agreement. All researchers should ensure that they are familiar with, and comply at all times with the confidentiality obligations in research contracts.

This extends to any agreements entered into whereby the research is not supported by external funding e.g. collaborative research, requiring a non-disclosure agreement, or any other agreed arrangements in relation to intellectual property and ownership of resulting research and data.

3.9 Health and Safety

Researchers should in all aspects of their work ensure the rights, safety and wellbeing of those associated with research activities that are undertaken at the School both as researchers and subjects of research.

3.10 Training and Skills

The School recognises the importance of training and mentoring in the development of those undertaking research activities. Researchers should ensure that they have the necessary training and resources to carry out research and report and resolve any unmet needs identified.

Student researchers, post-docs, research assistants, and research fellows, should be supervised by a member of faculty and the supervisor should ensure that the student observes London Business School Ethical Guidelines and Data Protection Policy.

4. Standards and Procedures

The following outlines the standards and procedures for good research conduct and is written with some of the key standards as recommended by the UKRIO Code of Practice (2009) and also compliments further external protocols and statements governing research activities such as the Concordat for Research Integrity (2012, 2019).

4.1 Research involving human participants, human material or personal data:

Any research undertaken involving human participants, human material, personal data, or security-sensitive data such as terrorist or extreme groups, must comply with the School's ethical review procedures as set out in the document entitled 'Procedure for the Ethical Review of London Business School Research'.

Informed Consent

Participants must be informed fully about the purpose, methods and intended possible uses of the research, what their participation in the research entails and what risks, if any, are involved. Participant consent must be specific and documented in written format. It is the researcher's responsibility to seek ongoing consent during the course of a project or study. (Refer to the online Ethical Approval Application Form)).

Avoidance of harm

Harm to research participants must be avoided at all times. The dignity, rights, safety and well-being of participants must be the primary consideration in any research project or study; where there is risk of harm, researchers must make arrangements to mitigate this risk.

Vulnerable populations

The appropriate care should be taken when research involves vulnerable groups, such as the elderly, children or those with mental illness. This is not an exhaustive list and researchers must give proper consideration to participants of this nature and seek the advice of the Research Ethics Committee where necessary.

No coercion

Research participants must participate in a voluntary way, free from any coercion.

Research involving deception

Deception should be avoided and should only be used if there is a strong scientific rationale for it. When research involves deception, the researcher should be mindful of how this may affect the research participant. The Research Ethics Committee will pay particular attention to research involving deception. Where deception or the misleading of participants is considered necessary, the central principle to consider when deciding the ethical soundness of deception is the reaction of the participant once debriefed.

Right to withdraw

Participants are not obliged to participate in research even after they have consented to it. They must be given the right to withdraw, including retrospectively, without any penalty and they are not obliged to provide a reason for withdrawing. They are entitled to ask for their own data to be destroyed.

Participant confidentiality

The confidentiality of information supplied by participants and their anonymity must be respected at all times. Any information which may identify the participant may not be revealed without the participant's prior consent in writing. In the first instance researchers should adhere to the **legal obligations associated under the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR 2018) and Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR** and consult the School's Data Protection Policy.

As outlined on the Information Commissioner's Office website, a key principle of the UK GDPR is that you process personal data securely by means of 'appropriate technical and organizational measures' – the 'security principle'.

In simple terms, researchers are obligated to consider, for example a risk analysis, as well as technical measures, which facilitate the protection of participants information. This means taking into account additional measures about the security of your processing, these may include, but are not limited to:

- Where appropriate look to use measures such as pseudonymisation and encryption
 - Embedding measures to ensure the 'confidentiality, integrity and availability' of the systems and services and the personal data you process within them.
 - Any measures must also enable you to restore access and availability to personal data in a timely manner
- coding data with numbers instead of names to protect the identity of participants;
 - using codes for identification of participants when transcribing audiotapes, and destroying the tapes on completion of transcription;
 - storing data with any identifying information in a locked file to which only one or two persons have access;

Debriefing

Participants should be debriefed verbally and/or in writing. At the end of all research studies, participants should be told what the purpose of the study was, i.e., what the study investigated. The researchers' contact details should be provided so that participants can contact them if they have any queries or concerns. (Refer to the online Ethical Approval Application Form for examples of debrief templates which can be tailored to suit your research accordingly.)

Online research studies

Online research studies should also uphold the above principles, including gaining informed consent, maintaining the right to withdraw, and debriefing participants. If the nature of the research is ethically complicated, and/or induces a negative state in participants, then it should generally not be carried out online and should instead be conducted in a setting where participants' well-being can be monitored.

Payments to participants

The willingness to volunteer to take part in research may be unduly influenced by the expectation of benefits or rewards. Payments made to individuals must not be so large as to induce the individuals to risk harm beyond that which they would usually undertake. Financial payments might cover reimbursement for travel expenses and / or time. Researchers should note that risks resulting from participation must be acceptable to participants even in the absence of inducement.

4.2 Collection and retention of data

In the first instance researchers should adhere to the **the legal obligations associated under the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR 2018) and Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR** and the School's Data Protection Policy in the appropriate management and storage of data collected in the course of research undertaken at the School.

Research methods adopted in the conduct of the research must be fully documented in a manner that would facilitate their replication by independent researchers.

Researchers must establish procedures for retention of research data, subject to any limitation imposed by the confidentiality of individuals, commercially sensitive data, and security-sensitive data such as terrorist or extreme groups. Research data related to publications should be available for discussion with other researchers, except where there are confidentiality provisions in place.

4.3 Publication and authorship

An essential part of good practice in research is the honest, accurate and timely publication of its findings.

Researchers have a duty to publish and disseminate their research findings accurately and without reporting any information that is misleading.

Authorship should be restricted to those contributors and collaborators who have made a significant intellectual or practical contribution to the work.

Researchers should list the work of all contributors who do not meet the criteria for authorship in an acknowledgements section.

Researchers should declare any potential or actual conflicts of interest in relation to their research when reporting their findings at meetings or in publications.

In the case of externally funded research or other professional bodies researchers should adhere to any conditions set out regarding the publication and dissemination of their research findings – this extends to any compliance obligations in adhering to the open access of research publications, and open research data mandates.

4.4 IP and Conflict

Researchers should consult the School Intellectual Property Policy on any conflicting issues that may arise in their research.

Researchers have a duty to anticipate any issues that might arise relating to intellectual property at the earliest opportunity and agree in advance how these issues will be addressed.

In the case of externally funded research any additional conditions relating to intellectual property which have been set out in the contractual funding agreement must be followed.

4.5 Research conducted outside the UK

Researchers should bear in mind the differences between civil, legal and financial positions of foreign countries and should be aware that there may be a number of national laws which can affect the conduct of their research.

In particular where developing societies are involved specific consideration must be given to the following:

whether the research could be carried out reasonably well within a developed country; that the characteristics and culture of the country do not diminish the researcher's respect for the rights and interests of participants involved; the reason for undertaking the study should usually be its relevance to the needs of the community in which it is carried out.

Researchers should follow the School ethical review procedures on any research which is to be conducted outside the UK or any research involving overseas collaboration.

4.6 Finance and Monitoring

Researchers should ensure that they are aware of the financial rules and regulations, and reporting and audit requirements of any externally funded research. In particular principal investigators must adhere to the financial parameters of the terms and conditions of externally awarded funds and the internal school regulations for purchasing and procurement.

Any concerns on the utilisation of monies for funded research should be reported in the first instance to the Head of Research & Fundraising..

5 Review

This Code of Practice was approved by Management Board on 21 November 2011. It was reviewed by Management Board in May 2016, to make reference to the School's obligations in regard to the Prevent duty. Since this time it has been reviewed periodically, at meetings of the Research Ethics Committee. Latest policy revision: June 2021

This Code will be reviewed and updated accordingly taking into account any changes in UK guidelines on good research practices and also any discipline specific codes of relevance.

Latest policy revision: June 2021